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# Personality correlates of battered women.

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PERSONALITY CORRELATES OF BATTERED WOMEN

by

Sharon Debra Horlick

(C)  
B. Sc. (Hons.), McGill University, 1976

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Department of Psychology  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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# ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory research was to investigate whether abused women differed from non-abused women in terms of personality variables. Specifically, an attempt was made to determine whether any variable or group of variables existed which could maximally distinguish the two groups. Additionally, the hypothesis that battered women exhibited a lower self-concept than non-battered women was tested. Subjects consisted of two groups of twenty-eight women: (1) battered, and (2) non-battered. All were either divorced, separated or single mothers. Subjects participated in a brief interview to elicit background data and then completed the Personality Research Form (PRF), Form E (Jackson, 1967), Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS; Fitts, 1965) and Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974). Analysis of the data demonstrated that personality differences did indeed exist between the two groups. A combination of three variables - the Dominance and Sentience scales of the PRF and the Androgyny scale of the BSRI - maximally distinguished the two groups. The hypothesis that battered women would exhibit a lower self concept than non-battered women was not supported. These results were discussed with reference to future research and practical application in the helping professions.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

A nut tree, an ass, and a woman  
are bound together by the same  
law. None of them will do well  
if the beatings cease.

Cognapus, Adagio, 1560.

However antiquated and inappropriate, the above prescription has survived the passage of time. More than four hundred years later, many men still rely on this old adage as a means of dealing with their wives. By current estimates the number of abused wives in the United States well exceeds one million (Durbin, 1974).

Due to the changing role of women and increased public awareness, wife abuse is beginning to be recognized as a major social problem. In recent years researchers have begun to investigate this area from a number of different perspectives, including the sociological, psychiatric and legal points of view.

The present study, exploratory in nature, is an attempt to investigate wife abuse from a psychological perspective. Specifically, personality variables, self-concept and sex roles will be examined with respect to wife abuse. An attempt will be made to determine whether it is possible to distinguish

battered from non-battered women on the basis of such variables.

### The Battered Wife: A Definition

Before reviewing the existing research in the area, the term battered wife must be defined. Various definitions exist in the literature, but the most comprehensive is that of Flynn (1977). He coins the term wife assault or wife beating and defines it as follows:

1. Assault, beating - the act of physical attack by one spouse on another, pushing, slapping, kicking, knifing, shooting or throwing an object with intent to inflict bodily harm.
2. Wife, spouse - any individual involved in a heterosexual relationship with another individual, whether in a formal marital union or a non formal one.

For the purposes of this research, the above definition will be used when referring to the battered or abused wife.

### Prevalence of Wife Abuse

At the moment, the incidence of wife abuse in North American society is unknown. Steinmetz and Straus (1974) suggest that since:

the family has generally been seen by society as the focus of love and gentleness, there is a tendency not to perceive or attend to the actual level of conflict and violence which occurs within the family. It is only when violence reaches the extreme of murder and severe injury to a child that society is willing to acknowledge the existence of violence in the family. (p. 47)

Selective inattention to the issues of violence in the family seems to have been reflected in the research interests of professionals as well. O'Brien (1971), for example, notes that in the Index for all editions of the Journal of Marriage and the Family, from its inception in 1939 through 1969, not a single article could be found which contained the word violence in the title.

It is only within recent years that wife abuse has been recognized as a problem which merits systematic investigation. However, since no full scale incidence studies have been published as yet, statistical evidence must be estimated from more general statistics available on domestic disturbance calls to the police, crime reports, applicants for divorce and so on.

Parnas (1967) estimates that more police calls involve family conflict than do calls for all criminal incidents including murders, rapes, non-family assaults, robberies, and muggings. Durbin (1974) states that:

Legal experts think that wife abuse is one of the most under-reported crimes in the country, even more under-reported than rape, which the FBI estimates is ten times more prevalent than statistics indicate. A conservative estimate puts the number of battered wives nationwide at well over a million. (p. 64).

Similarly, the FBI reports that one in every five police officers killed in the line of duty in 1974 died while trying

to break up a family fight (Martin, 1974).

From another point of view, O'Brien (1971) and Levinger (1966) studied applicants for divorce. O'Brien found that 17% of his cases spontaneously mentioned overt violent behavior between the spouses (violent being defined as occurrence of behavior which openly threatened the physical well-being of a member of the family). Levinger found that 25% of the middle class couples and about 40% of the working class couples he studied gave "physical abuse" as a major complaint.

Richard Gelles (1972), a sociologist, identified forty families who were suspected by police or social agencies of experiencing some sort of intra-family violence. Over half of these families reported some incidence of one or more spouse assaults. However, a control group of neighbouring families, assumed to be non-violent, reported some incidence of spouse assault in over one third of their own families. Five of those families reported a regular incidence of spouse assault. Further, Straus (1974) in administering questionnaires to 385 college students, found that 16% of them reported interspousal violence between their parents in the same year.

In general, then, although no specific data exist concerning the incidence of wife abuse, one can conclude from the above research that the problem, although perhaps not readily visible is prevalent. In addition, it is probably

more common than one would think and highly under-reported so that the above estimates could be considered quite conservative.

### Review of the Literature

A multi-faceted problem, wife abuse has been examined from a number of different perspectives including the sociological, psychiatric and legal points of view. Upon review of the literature it became clear to this author that one could not posit sociological forces, for example, as being responsible for wife abuse without simultaneously keeping in mind other perspectives. Although a comprehensive literature review will be presented here, the dividing lines will necessarily be arbitrary. The reader should keep in mind the complex nature of the area and be aware that no single theory which will be presented can account for all the data. Each theory or factor must be considered in interaction with the others when one attempts to understand the phenomenon of wife abuse.

### Explanatory Theories

Sociological. In exploring conjugal violence sociologists have posited theories which focus on how forces in our society impinge on and interact with the individual to cause a particular behavior or set of behaviors. Three theories of interspousal violence will be discussed briefly and the data supporting them will be examined.

Structural theory (Coser, 1967), cultural theory (Wolfgang & Feracuti, 1967), and resource theory (Goode, 1971) all attempt to account for family violence. Structural theory posits that structural conditions such as lack of adequate resources and frustrating life experiences give rise to intra-family violence. Therefore, it is predicted that one should find more violence among families in lower social positions since it is assumed they suffer more frustrations and blocked goals than do families in higher social positions.

Cultural theory examines the norms of groups or individuals who approve of violence rather than define it as deviant. The cultural theory locates proviolent norms among individuals and groups in the lower social strata, thus concluding that this group comprises a sub-culture of violence.

Resource theory suggests that violence or force is used as a resource when other resources are lacking. It is assumed that "the greater resources an individual can command, the more force he can muster, the less he will actually deploy or use force in an overt manner." (O'Brien, 1971, p.65). Thus, violence would be expected to be most common in those families in which resources such as money, power, and prestige are lacking.

Although the above theories are based on different propositions, all three predict that conjugal violence is more likely in families occupying lower levels of the social hierarchy. The data to confirm this prediction, however, are



not clear.

Levinger (1966) in studying 600 applicants for divorce found that 23% of the middle class couples and about 40% of the working class couples he studied gave "physical abuse" as a major complaint. Similarly, Gayford (1975) in a study of 100 battered women found 29% of the women's partners working as skilled laborers, while 65% were unskilled if they worked at all. Only 6% of the partners were classified as professionals. Finally, Miller (1975) cited Dicks (1967) and Whitehurst (1971) as suggesting that acting out of tension by physical violence, desertion, and withholding of support is more prevalent and "legitimate" among the working class than among other groups.

While agreeing that violence is probably more prevalent in lower classes due to external structural factors, Steinmetz and Straus (1974) suggest the possibility that what researchers sense as an underlying class difference in conjugal violence may only be an artifact of such things as (1) lack of privacy in lower class families which makes their fights more visible than those of affluent families, and (2) a greater tendency to make use of the police and social agencies. Similarly, Flynn (1977) suggests that the lower one's income, the greater the likelihood of one's characteristics becoming a matter of public account and record.

Stark and McEvoy (1970) in a sample survey conducted for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of

Violence found that over one fifth of the respondents approved of slapping one's spouse under certain conditions. Sixteen percent of those with eight or less years of schooling and 25% of college educated individuals condoned a husband slapping a wife. Further analysis of the data showed those with an income of \$5000 or less were considerably less approving than those in other income brackets.

Erlanger (1974) reported that 25% of his sample of American adults approved of husband-wife battles and the greater the educational level, the greater the acceptance of marital violence. In addition, results indicated that low income respondents were no more prone to nor more accepting of violence in the home than were middle or upper-income respondents.

Bard (1971) studied the incidence of wife abuse in a West Harlem community consisting mainly of working class blacks. Results indicated that the number of wife abuse cases roughly equalled those reported in another study of a white middle class area with approximately the same population (Johnson, 1975).

Clearly, the evidence does not lend itself to a straightforward conclusion concerning the predictions of the various theories discussed. At best, one can conclude that conjugal violence is not characteristic or typical solely of members of the working or lower class. It is a phenomenon which

appears to be found at all socio-economic levels and only further research will elucidate the confusing data.

Psychiatric. Explanations of wife abuse from the psychiatric point of view tend to focus on characteristics within the individual which lead to this behavior. Masochism in the female, personality disorder in the male and childhood factors have all been posited to explain the phenomenon of wife abuse.

#### MASOCHISM

According to Freudian theory, the feminine masochist is the type of woman who seeks or accepts punishment or suffering as a condition of love. The idea that masochism is a typically feminine trait was stated by Freud in his New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (1973)

The suggestion of woman's aggressiveness which is prescribed (sic) for them constitutionally and imposed on them socially, favors the development of powerful masochistic impulses, which succeed, as we know, in binding erotically, the destructive trends, which have been directed inwards. Thus, masochism as people say, is truly feminine.  
(p. 149).

Deutsch (1930) in her theory of femininity went further and considered masochistic wishes to be violated and humiliated - both physically and mentally - as the clues to feminine psychology.

The feminine masochist is the personality type pertinent

to a discussion of the battered wife. As Handelman and Ward (1976) and Nichols (1976) note, the belief that the wife encourages, provokes, or even enjoys abusive treatment is popular among the general public. Within the psychiatric literature this explanation has on the one hand been considered valid, but in the majority of cases has been dismissed as being too simplistic.

For example, Snell, Rosenwald, and Robey (1964) studied twelve families in detail and interviewed both the husband and wife at least three times. They described the wives as "aggressive, efficient, masculine, and sexually frigid" and the husbands as "shy, sexually ineffectual, reasonably hard-working mothers' boys". The authors interpreted the husbands' aggressive behavior as filling masochistic needs in the wives and considered the violence to be necessary for the couples' equilibrium. Periods of violent behavior were considered to give the wives apparent masochistic gratification.

On the other hand, Scott (1974) writing in the British Journal of Psychiatry cautions against making the assumption that the woman is a masochist and prefers a battering husband. He states: "it is expected that future research will demonstrate that frank masochism or sadism in either marital partner is not a central feature." (p. 437). A number of other authors (Martin, 1976; Gayford, 1975; Gelles, 1974; O'Brien, 1974) concur with Scott whose statement reflects the view of

most authorities on the subject. Generally the current literature suggests that masochistic tendencies in the female are not a basic determinant of wife abuse, and represent the exception rather than the rule.

#### PERSONALITY DISORDER IN THE MALE

A number of researchers have suggested personality disorders in the male as being a prime factor in wife abuse. Scott (1974) assumes that wife battering is a result of a pathological condition existing in the husband. Erin Pizzey, author of "Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear" (1974) classified men who beat their wives into four categories: (1) alcoholics (2) psychotics (3) psychopaths, and (4) plain bullies. Faulk (1974) studied 23 men in custody for charges of seriously assaulting their wives or cohabitees and categorized them as follows: (1) dependent-passive (2) dependent and suspicious (3) violent and bullying (4) dominating, and (5) stable and affectionate. At the time the violence occurred, 16 of the men were found to have been experiencing a mental disturbance, usually a depressive episode, and representatives of the first group were found to be most common. Dr. Fred Jensen of the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry concurs with the view that abusive husbands are pathological personalities (Gabor, 1976).

However, the general consensus in the literature is that

a very small percentage of men who beat their wives are actually mentally ill (Gabor, 1976; Steinmetz, 1976). Most authors would agree with the following statement made by Steinmetz: "...studies indicate that such actions more often reflect the carrying out of a role model which the abusing parent or violent husband learned from his parents and which is brought into play when social stresses become intolerable." (Langley & Levy, p. 49).

#### CHILDHOOD FACTORS

Violence in the family of origin of either the battering husband or battered wife has also been posited as a determinant of wife abuse. Singer (1971) and Gelles (1974) suggest that violence is learned through childhood experience and viewing the parent as a role model of violence. Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1961) assert that children viewing their parents' acts of violence toward one another might imitate this behavior as children and in later life. Goode (1971) makes the point that on the one hand children are taught that violence is bad but on the other are shown by parents that it can be used to serve one's own ends. Therefore one would hypothesize a positive relationship between exposure to violence between one's own parents as a child and the level of violence one experienced in one's own marriage. Available data seem to support the above prediction.

Flynn (1977) found a direct relationship between being a

a victim or an assaulter and having witnessed parental violence in one's own childhood. Interview data also revealed that in at least 33% of the cases either the victim or assaulter had been abused as a child. Similarly, Gelles (1976) reported that women who had observed spousal violence in their own parents were more likely to be victims of abuse and that the more frequently a woman was struck by her parents, the more likely she was to be struck by her husband. Other authors (Steinmetz, 1976; Gayford, 1975; Miller, 1975; & Pizzey, 1974) have reported similar conclusions.

The evidence seems to indicate clearly, then, that parental role models and exposure to violence as a child are positively associated with either becoming a batterer or a victim of abuse in one's own marriage.

Other Variables. A number of other variables have been found to be associated with wife abuse. Although they are not considered directly causative factors, their presence or absence seems to have an influence on the phenomenon. These factors will be briefly examined and their relationship with wife abuse will be discussed.

#### ALCOHOL

A high association between alcohol use and wife abuse has been reported in the literature to date. Gelles (1974) noted that in 48% of the families he studied where violence

had occurred, drinking had accompanied the abuse. Snell et al. (1964) concluded that wife beating is common among alcoholic men. Similarly, Whitehurst (1975) noted that alcohol abuse was seen by the women he interviewed as the foremost problem which contributed to their abuse. Gayford (1975) and Scott (1974) concluded that intoxication is often associated with spouse abuse.

Whether ~~alcohol~~ alcohol can be considered a purely causative factor in conjugal violence is not clear. Gelles (1974) notes that alcohol has been traditionally conceptualized as a "super-ego solvent" i.e., an agent which tends to break down social inhibitions and promote out of character behavior. This point of view was reflected by the women interviewed who saw alcohol abuse as the major problem in their marriages, not the violence per se. Other authors have commented on the functions alcohol serves in connection with a violent act. Davis (1961) and McCaghy (1968) suggest that drinking can serve as a means of neutralizing or disavowing the deviance of hitting a family member. MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) point out that due to existing norms and attitudes toward alcohol use, the drinker can use the period of time when he drinks as a time-out where he is not responsible for his actions. Gelles (1974) suggests that individuals who wish to carry out a violent act become intoxicated in order to carry out the act and therefore do not have to take respon-



sibility for it - the alcohol becomes the focus. Therefore, one can conclude that alcohol, though not necessarily directly causative, can be considered a major correlate of wife abuse due to existing norms and attitudes which excuse the individual's behavior while "under the influence".

#### EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

A few authors (Gelles, 1974; O'Brien, 1971) have investigated the roles of level of education and occupational status in wife abuse. Obviously, level of education and occupational status are not independent of social class and it has already been stated that wife abuse is present at all socio-economic levels. Given this, these authors have taken a more qualitative look at conditions within social classes.

Goode (1971) and O'Brien (1971) hypothesized that one should find that "violence is most common in those families where the classically dominant member (male) fails to possess the superior skills or resources on which his preferred status is supposed to be legitimately based" (p. 68). Therefore it was expected that violence would be more prevalent in families where the husband had few resources and/or was deficient relative to the wife in achieved status characteristics such as education and occupation.

O'Brien compared violent husbands with non-violent husbands and found support for this hypothesis. Husbands in the violence sub-group of families (1) showed underachievement

in work roles as well as achievement potential which was deficient to what their wives might expect. (2) were more often dissatisfied with their jobs (3) were more often educational dropouts from high school or college (4) more often brought home earnings which were the source of serious conflict and (5) when compared with their wives were less educated and holders of jobs with an occupational status lower than that of the wife's father. The author concluded that violent behavior could be interpreted as an effort by the husband to reaffirm his superior ascribed sex-role status. Similarly, Gelles (1974) found that violence is more prevalent in families where the husband's education and occupational status are lower than his wife's. Gelles suggests that:

it may not be fruitful to think of the relationship between the husband's status inconsistency and family violence as a case of either one causal proposition or another, but rather the dynamics of violence suggest that violence is a product of a combination of frustrations, lack of resources, and accompanying conflict that arises when husbands fail to possess the necessary status and skills expected of the husband-provider role." (p. 143).

Finally, Whitehurst (1974) in a similar vein, suggested that a husband's violent reaction to his wife involves the notion of control of the wife in terms of self-concept of the husband. Consequently, the smaller the need of the husband to control his wife, the less likely is the possibility of a violent encounter.

### SOCIAL ISOLATION

Both Miller (1975) and Gelles (1974) have noted that the battered wife is usually isolated from meaningful links with the community. Therefore, these women have few social resources within the community to whom they could turn to for help. Gelles concluded from interview data that social isolation precedes violence and is a causal agent in conjugal violence. Similarly Miller (1975) indicated that violence occurs due to an increasingly high degree of satisfaction being demanded from the marital situation which is not forthcoming.

### PREGNANCY

Several authors (Flynn, 1977; Gayford, 1975; Gelles, 1974) have reported an association between pregnancy and violence. Flynn noted that 50% of the victims interviewed had been pregnant. Similarly Gayford (1975) reported that pregnancy seems to be associated with violence in some cases. Interestingly, Gayford found that 60% of the women in his sample were pregnant before marriage. Gelles reported that in 23% of families where violence had occurred wives had been beaten when pregnant. A number of explanations for this have been suggested ranging from increased stress, both financial and psychological, which an impending birth brings, to a subconscious attempt on the part of the husband to terminate

the pregnancy and thus relieve himself of the forthcoming pressure and responsibility.

#### JEALOUSY/SEX

Scott (1974) notes that jealousy constitutes a well recognized motive for violence. He states that: "there seems to be a continuous gradation from situational jealousy through various degrees of sensitivity to rejection, jealous personalities, and illness of various sorts having a delusional component which can be dangerous" (p. 437). Whitehurst (1974, 1971) has also discussed violence potential in the case of violently jealous husbands who have a need to control their wives and whose self-esteem is dependent on this measure of control. Constantine and Constantine (1974) see sex, like alcohol, as affording the husband an excuse for venting his violent feelings which centre around the loss of control of the wife as property, and Gelles (1974) noted that violence often occurs in the course of jealous arguments over suspected cheating.

In summary, various theories in the literature have been suggested to explain the occurrence of wife abuse. These include both sociological and psychiatric conceptualizations. Additionally, various situational factors have been suggested which seem to influence the presence of abuse.

Another interesting facet of the problem which will be

examined shortly is the curious finding that many abused wives find it very difficult to terminate this life threatening situation. This aspect of the problem will be discussed briefly. Hopefully, the reader will gain some insight into the phenomenological world of the abused woman.

#### Battered Wives - Take It or Leave It?

When discussing battered wives, the assumption is often made that a woman who has been repeatedly abused by her partner would leave the situation and avoid further harm. However, the situation the abused wife finds herself in is complicated by a number of factors which are not solely related to the extent or severity of the physical abuse.

Handleman and Ward (1976) noted that on the average the battered wife has been married at least ten years. Gayford (1975) reported that of the 100 women in his sample 89% had fled from their homes - 36% had fled more than four times, some had fled ten or twenty times. The question remains - why do these women return and why do some women not even try to leave.

Socialization of women in our culture seems to have bearing on this question. Traditionally, women have been trained for marriage and motherhood and according to current cultural values, though a woman may have other interests her prime source of satisfaction is her marriage. Unlike the man

who is considered successful when he has achieved within his occupation, the woman who achieves is generally not considered successful unless she also has a husband and children (Bardwick, 1971, p. 158). It has also been the woman's responsibility to keep her marriage and family together and happy. Until recently, life without a husband and/or children has not been considered a viable alternative for a woman. As a result, a woman who has been beaten is very apt to consider her marriage (and consequently herself) a failure and feel guilty. In some cases, this line of thinking may go further and the woman may come to believe she deserves the abuse for failing her husband in some way (Martin, 1976). Negative self concept and a fear of social stigma and economic hardship have also been suggested as possible reasons for the woman not breaking off the relationship (Truninger, 1971). Martin (1976) notes:

One of the most chilling side effects of wife-beating is that it often destroys the beaten women's self-respect and paralyzes her will. Her physical weakness and inability to defend herself can become metaphors for her inability to live in the world at large (p. 8).

Scanzoni (1972) suggests that the decision whether or not to leave the violent situation may be partly based on subjective definitions attached to violence and partly on the ratio of this punishment to other marital benefits such as security, a home for the children and so on. Gelles (1976) and Whitehurst

(1975) both reported that some of the women in their samples believed violence in marriage was a fact of life that had to be coped with, rather than changed. Gelles (1976) points out though, that the fewer resources a wife has in her marriage and the fewer alternatives she has to marriage, the more entrapped and reluctant she will be to seek outside intervention. In addition, Schuyler (1976) notes that the police and courts usually do little to protect the battered wife who also lacks the financial and psychological resources necessary for individual action.

Other reasons which have been cited for women not seeking help are: (1) fear of retaliation by the husband (2) belief that the husband will reform (3) doubt on the part of the woman that she can get along on her own (4) concern of the effects of family break-up on the children (5) lack of support available from family, friends, and/or community services and (6) lack of knowledge about alternatives (Handleman & Ward, 1976; Martin, 1976; Truninger, 1971).

Still, the fact remains that a number of women do manage to terminate their relationships with an abusing partner. Truninger (1971) found that a woman attempts to dissolve a marriage only after a history of conflict and reconciliation. The general consensus seems to be that the woman can no longer believe her husband's promises that the violence will cease and can no longer forgive past episodes. In addition, the

decision to leave is often precipitated when the husband begins to abuse the children as well.

### The Legal Status of the Battered Wife

Emily Jane Goodman, co-author of Money, Women, and Power (1976) sums up the dilemma of the battered wife when attempting to make use of the legal system in order to protect herself from further harm at the hands of her husband.

A woman passenger in an auto accident may sue the driver for legal damages whether they are married or legal strangers. But if she's punched in the nose, her legal status depends on her marital status. A wife hit by her husband loses access to courts and laws available to others. The problem is that the laws and courts are supposedly acting in the interests of the family unit, though at the expense of married women. The attitude of the legislature, police, and judges is that they are dealing not with a public crime, but signs of a troubled marriage. (p.243).

7 Although the crimes a wife-beater commits when he abuses his wife include assault and/or battery, aggravated assault, intent to assault, or murder, the attitude of the police and courts is essentially one of non-enforcement of the penalties for these offenses. Many police departments give domestic disturbance calls low priority, taking anywhere from twenty minutes to several hours to respond and sometimes not responding at all (Martin, 1976). When police do respond, the prevalent attitude is to avoid making an arrest. Rather, the police usually try to calm the couple and encourage them to



talk to settle their differences. This attitude of non-enforcement is reflected in an outline for handling domestic complaints prepared by the Police Training Academy in Michigan (Eisenberg & Micklow, 1976). The outline offers the following recommendations:

- a. Avoid arrest if possible. Appeal to their vanity.
- b. Explain the procedure of obtaining a warrant.
  1. complainant must sign complaint
  2. must appear in court
  3. consider loss of time
  4. cost of court
- c. State that your only interest is to prevent a breach of the peace.
- d. Explain that attitudes usually change by court time.
- e. Recommend a postponement.
  1. court not in session
  2. no judge available
- f. Don't be too harsh or critical (p. 156-7).

For a woman who has called the police for protection from a violent spouse, this procedure is unsatisfactory. Truninger (1971) notes that "not only does it minimize the seriousness of the husband's actions...but it also effectively traps the wife with children in the home" (p. 272).

The woman who decides to pursue legal avenues and prosecute her husband usually fares no better than the one who has called the police. Much confusion exists because wife abuse can be considered a criminal offense, a civil matter, or both. Again the woman is discouraged from taking criminal action and is often forced to accept intermediary steps (Langley & Levy, 1977). These include warning letters, peace bonds, and restraining orders which most attorneys perceive as basically

ineffective and meaningless (Truninger, 1971). Finally, much of the time, wife abuse is diverted out of the criminal process into counselling, psychiatric care, or enforceable warnings (Langley & Levy, 1977). Eisenberg and Micklow (1976) summarize the situation of the battered wife vis a vis the legal system succinctly in the conclusion of their article. "The legal system only offers the battered wife a band-aid for her wounds, both physical and psychological." (p. 159).

#### Summary

As is evident from the above review, most research in the area of wife abuse has focused on the identification of factors which cause abuse. Demographic variables such as socio-economic status, education, and occupation have been suggested as determinants. From another perspective abuse has been explained as a result of psychopathology existing in the female and/or male. Finally, the legal status of the battered wife has been examined in an attempt to explain why she does not terminate this life threatening situation.

#### Personality Correlates of the Battered Woman

To date, the only information available concerning the personality of the abused woman has been anecdotal. Martin (1976) has described the battered woman as having a negative self concept. Other authors (Gelles, 1974; Pizzey, 1974;

Langley & Levy, 1977) have presented case histories and interview data which shed some light on the characteristics of the abused woman. However, there has been no systematic research which has addressed itself to exploring personality variables in an attempt to understand the battered woman. One of the objectives of the present research was to fill this gap in the literature. /

### Self Concept

In discussing the abused woman, one characteristic which has been briefly considered is the self-concept. In general, an individual's actual perception and estimation of himself is commonly referred to as the self concept (Wells & Marwell, 1976), and the evaluative aspect of self conception is often referred to as self-esteem (Gergen, 1971; Gecas, 1971). Much research has dealt directly with the question of how people feel about themselves through the use of questionnaires and self-administered scales and has attempted to correlate this to specific aspects of human behavior. Generally, it is assumed that there is some optimal self-esteem level associated with effective personal functioning. Most commonly, high self-esteem is thought to be associated with healthy functioning, while individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to exhibit anxiety neurotic behaviors (Wyllie, 1961; Fitts, 1972a, 1972b, 1972c), to perform less effectively

under stress and failure (Shrauger & Rosenberg, 1970) and generally to be less socially effective. The individual with low self-esteem is also more likely to lack confidence, be dependent on others (Rosenberg, 1965) and value conformity (Linton & Graham, 1959). When one stops to reflect for a moment it is interesting to note that the above adjectives, while describing those individuals with low self-esteem, are also those which are commonly used to describe the average female in North American society (Martin, 1976).

O'Leary (1974), reviewing the literature on self concept in women, notes that "although the manner in which sex role stereotypes with their associated values influence the self concepts of individuals has not been empirically documented, it is clear that the prevalence of such consensually endorsed stereotypes will substantially affect women's self perceptions and influence behavioral response based on these perceptions" (p. 815). Bem (1976, 1971) concluded from a review of the literature, that a high degree of sex-typed behavior in women was correlated with low self-esteem, high anxiety, and generally poor emotional adjustment. Maccoby (1974) in discussing self concept in women suggests that "surely women, knowing that they belong to a sex that is devalued...must have a poor opinion of themselves. We would expect to be able to conclude...that women have lower self-esteem than men" (p. 151).

Several authors (Martin, 1976; Pizzey, 1974; & Truninger, 1971) have reported anecdotally that abused women appear to

have a negative self-concept. The present research examined the self-concept of battered women in comparison with a group of non-battered women.

General Review of the Personality Research Form and Relevant Research (Jackson, 1967)

The Personality Research Form (PRF) is an instrument which has successfully been used to examine a variety of populations on the basis of personality variables.

1. Description of the PRF. The PRF is a personality test designed to focus upon areas of normal functioning rather than psychopathology. Based on the set of personality variables originally suggested by Murray (1938) it provides a measure of twenty bipolar personality traits as well as two validity scales. (See Appendix A for scales and a description of high scoring individuals and defining trait adjectives). Factor analytic studies have shown that the scales may be organized into a number of superordinate categories. However, the separate measures are sufficiently distinct to justify their separate use as scales and have been shown to be uniquely and discriminantly associated with relevant criteria. With respect to the issues of reliability and validity, Kelly (1972), in a critical review, reported that the procedure employed in construction of the PRF were unusually adequate with respect to scale homogeneity, stability, freedom from influence of response sets, and validity. For a comprehensive

description of construction and empirical evaluation of the PRF, the reader may refer to the test manual (Jackson, 1974).

2. Relevant research utilizing the PRF. The PRF has been used in a wide variety of research contexts. Studies have ranged over many topics, from characteristics of effective psychotherapists for different types of patients to studies of environmental factors affecting personality development. The PRF has also been used to determine the extent to which established groups differ in personality. Hoffman (1970c, 1969), for example, used the PRF to determine how persons in various occupational, ethnic, or national groupings compared. Sandler (1972) studied the attributes of a group of adult non-professional mental health workers while Hoffmann (1970c) assessed the personality of student nurses with respect to possible differences with a more general student population.

The PRF has also been employed to study characteristics of a number of deviant groups such as transvestites (Bent & Prince, 1960), alcoholics (Hoffmann, 1970; 1971; Nerviano, 1976), depressives (Hoffmann, 1970a), student activists (Pierce & Schwartz, 1971), student drug users (Holroyd & Kahn, 1974), and novelty seekers (Pearson, 1970).

In the present study, the PRF was employed to study the personality characteristics of a group of battered women with respect to a group of non-battered women. Additionally an attempt was made to determine whether any of the PRF scales

could alone or in combination maximally discriminate the two groups.

#### Statement of the Problem

To reiterate, research in the area of wife abuse to date has concentrated on identifying factors which cause or contribute to the abuse. There has been no attempt, however to explore the personality characteristics of the battered wife or to determine whether she differs in any significant way from a woman who is not abused. Additionally, it has been reported that abused women generally exhibit a negative self concept, however research evidence to support this observation has not been forthcoming.

The present research:

(1) attempted to determine whether personality differences exist between a group of battered and a group of non-battered women.

(2) attempted to test the hypothesis that battered women will exhibit lower self-esteem than non-battered women.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Subjects

Subjects consisted of two groups of twenty eight women: (1) battered, and (2) non-battered. All subjects were either divorced, separated, or single mothers.

Battered women were solicited from Hiatus House, a shelter for women and their children in the Windsor area, and Parents Without Partners (PWP), an organization for divorced, widowed, or single individuals with children. Eighteen of the subjects in group 1 had been residents of Hiatus House and the remaining 10 were members of PWP. All subjects included in group 1 conformed to the definition of battered wife, previously stated.

The mean age of women in group 1 was 31.57 years, mean number of children, 3.5, and mean educational level 10.96 years. Marital status included two single women, seventeen separated women, and nine divorced women. The mean length of time the abuse was experienced was 8.57 years.

Subjects in group 2 were solicited from PWP and from an advertisement placed in the personal column of the Windsor Star. Five subjects were members of PWP and the remaining



23 responded to the advertisement. All members of group 2 were interviewed to assure they did not meet the criteria for entry into group 1.

The mean age of women in group 2 was 33.03 years, mean number of children, 2.25, and mean educational level 12.78 years. Marital status included three single women, fifteen separated women, and ten divorced women.

All subjects were informed that they would receive feedback upon completion of the study.

#### Instruments

1. Interview schedule. A 47-item interview schedule (See Appendix B) was constructed by the author designed to elicit demographic data and relevant information concerning the marital relationship. In addition, data pertaining to violence in the woman's or her spouse's childhood were elicited. The interview required approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

2. Personality Research Form, Form E. In its original form the PRF was designed to be used primarily with college level populations. Form E, however, may be employed with a wide range of different populations including older children and adolescents and populations outside the college environment. Additionally, this form requires less time to complete.

Form E contains 352 items to be answered true or false.

The items are divided into twenty-two 16-item scales.

Approximately 30-45 minutes are required for completion.

PRF validity and reliability have been demonstrated by Jackson and Guthries (1967), Jackson and Lay (1967) and Kusyszyn (1968).

3. Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS), Form C & R. The TSCS was developed by William Fitts in 1965. (See Appendix C). A Likert-type instrument, it consists of 100 statements covering a range of topics to be answered on a scale of 1 (completely false) to 5 (completely true). The clinical and research form of the TSCS assesses subjects on fourteen different components of the self concept and includes nine self-esteem scales, as well as a number of validity scales. Approximately 10-15 minutes are required for completion of the TSCS.

This instrument is in current clinical and research use, is simple for the subject and correlates well with other known personality measures (Berg, 1965). Additionally, it is applicable to the whole range of psychological adjustment from well functioning individuals to psychiatric patients. TSCS reliability and validity have been demonstrated by Fitts (1965).

For the present study, the author considered one particular self-concept summary score - the Total Positive + Negative (P + N) Score (test-retest reliability .88). This

is the most important scale of the TSCS as it reflects overall self-esteem with high scores reflecting a positive, and low scores, a negative self-concept.

4. Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The development of the BSRI was based on the premise that masculinity and femininity do not represent bipolar ends of a single continuum. Rather, an individual might be androgynous; that is, have both masculine and feminine characteristics. The BSRI includes both a masculinity scale and a femininity scale, each of which contains 20 personality characteristics which were selected on the basis of sex-typed social desirability, not on the basis of differential endorsement of males and females. (See Appendix D).

A 60-item scale, the BSRI requires an individual to indicate on a seven point scale how well each of 60 masculine, feminine, and neutral characteristics describes himself. The scale ranges from 1 (never to almost never true) to 7 (always or almost always true). On the basis of his/her responses, each person receives three major scores: a masculinity score, a femininity score, and an androgyny score. In addition, a social desirability score can be computed. For the purposes of this study, the androgyny score was of interest. It should be noted that the greater the absolute value of the androgyny score, the more the person is sex-

typed or sex reversed. High positive scores indicate femininity and high negative scores indicate masculinity. The scale required approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. BSRI reliability and validity have been demonstrated by Bem (1974).

### Procedure


Subjects in both groups were personally contacted by the author and a mutually convenient appointment time was arranged. The testing session took place either at the home of the subject or the interviewer and required approximately 90-120 minutes for completion.

Each subject was interviewed first, following which the psychological scales were administered. Instructions for completion of each scale were reviewed with each subject. Subjects were required to complete the BSRI twice, so that two sets of scores were gathered. The first set indicated the subject's perception of herself at the present time while the second set reflected the individual's perception of herself while she was married.

The sequence of administration of the scales was counter balanced to control for order effects.

### Statistical Analysis

All statistical analyses were performed using the



Statistical Analysis System (SAS; Barr, Goodnight, Sall & Helwig, 1976).

The major analysis which was performed was a stepwise multiple regression using group membership as the criterion. Battered wives were assigned a score of 1 and non-battered women were assigned a score of 0. Multiple regression is a general statistical technique which will analyse the relationship between a criterion variable (dependent variable) and a set of predictor variables (independent variables). A stepwise technique will, in addition, attempt to select the minimum number of independent variables that will produce the highest possible multiple correlation with the criterion.\*

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\*The reader may at this point question why a stepwise discriminant function procedure was not employed. However, with only two groups and any number of variables, the solution for a discriminant function analysis is obtainable through the use of a multiple regression analysis (Nunnally, 1967, p. 393). Therefore, for two groups, the two procedures are virtually identical.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

#### Univariate Statistics

The raw data consisted of two sets of variables: demographic variables and personality measures. The demographic variables were the age, marital status (MS), number of children (NKID), and educational level (EDUC) of the subjects. The personality measures included the twenty-two PRF scales, the Total Positive and Negative Score of the TSCS (TSCS), and the two androgyny scores of the BSRI. The two androgyny scores were classified as follows: (1) TASCORE - androgyny score while married, and (2) NASCORE - androgyny score at present. Tables 1 and 2 give the means and standard deviations of these measures for each of the total, battered, and non-battered sample.

Due to the difficulties encountered in obtaining a large sample, the data yielded many more predictor variables than subjects. Therefore t-tests were performed to pre-select the variables to be utilized in subsequent analyses.

TABLE 1  
Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Data

Demographic Data	Total Sample <sup>a</sup>		Battered <sup>b</sup>		Non-Battered <sup>c</sup>	
	$\bar{x}$	$s$	$\bar{x}$	$s$	$\bar{x}$	$s$
Age	32.30	6.88	31.57	6.84	33.03	6.97
Marital Status (MS)	2.25	0.61	2.25	0.58	2.25	0.64
Number of Children (NKID)	2.87	2.08	3.50	2.42	2.25	1.46
Educational Level (EDUC)	11.87	2.53	10.96	2.02	12.78	2.68

<sup>a</sup> $\underline{n} = 56$ .

<sup>b</sup> $\underline{n} = 28$ .

<sup>c</sup> $\underline{n} = 28$ .

TABLE 2  
Descriptive Statistics for Personality Variables

Personality Variables	Total Sample <sup>a</sup>		Battered <sup>b</sup>		Non-Battered <sup>c</sup>	
	$\bar{x}$	$s$	$\bar{x}$	$s$	$\bar{x}$	$s$
Abasement (ABA)	7.76	2.99	8.89	3.00	6.64	2.56
Achievement (ACH)	9.13	2.52	9.07	2.34	9.18	2.72
Affiliation (AFF)	9.66	3.33	9.10	3.36	10.21	3.26
Aggression (AGG)	7.54	3.03	7.54	3.06	7.54	3.05
Autonomy (AUT)	6.68	3.43	5.82	2.76	7.54	3.84
Change (CH)	8.48	3.02	8.21	2.63	8.75	3.40
Cognitive Structure (CS)	8.30	2.96	8.43	2.64	8.18	3.29
Defendence (DEF)	6.23	2.72	6.00	2.96	6.46	2.50
Dominance (DOM)	6.44	3.81	4.61	3.25	8.29	3.47
Endurance (END)	9.29	3.17	9.54	3.08	9.04	3.28
Exhibition (EX)	6.55	3.72	4.96	2.68	8.14	3.96
Harmavoidance (HA)	11.61	3.16	12.79	2.70	10.43	3.19
Impulsivity (IM)	7.23	3.76	6.86	3.45	7.61	4.07



TABLE 2 CONTINUED

Personality Variables	Total Sample <sup>a</sup>			Battered <sup>b</sup>			Non-Battered <sup>c</sup>		
	$\bar{x}$	$s$		$\bar{x}$	$s$		$\bar{x}$	$s$	
Nurturance (NUR)	11.73	2.73		12.18	2.34		11.29	3.05	
Order (OR)	8.38	4.49		8.32	4.68		8.43	4.39	
Play (PL)	7.93	2.90		7.04	2.80		8.82	2.78	
Sentience (SE)	9.52	3.46		7.96	3.84		11.07	2.16	
Social Recognition (SO)	7.00	3.47		7.11	3.24		6.89	3.75	
Succorance (SU)	7.52	3.40		8.07	2.97		6.96	3.76	
Understanding (UN)	8.52	3.44		7.32	3.00		9.71	3.47	
Infrequency (IN)	0.39	0.65		0.25	0.51		0.54	0.74	
Desirability (DY)	9.96	3.01		9.46	3.26		10.46	2.71	
Self Concept (TSCS)	295.96	20.49		297.29	18.50		294.64	22.57	
TASORE	0.90	1.16		1.28	1.18		0.54	1.03	
NASORE	0.47	0.87		0.68	0.96		0.26	0.72	

## TABLE 2 CONTINUED

Note. Maximum score for any PRF scale = 20.

Maximum score for TSCS = 400.

Maximum score for TASCORE, NASCORE = 16/.

$a_n = 56.$

$b_n = 28.$

$c_n = 28.$

The results of the t-tests are presented in Table 3. As is evident, battered women had more children and less education than women who were not abused. In terms of personality variables, abused women scored higher on Abasement and Harmavoidance and lower on Dominance, Exhibition, Play, Sentience and Understanding than non-battered women.

On the basis of these differences then, one might describe a battered woman as an individual who tends to be self-blaming, fearful, non-assertive, uninquisitive, and modest. Additionally, she could be described as someone who does not spend a great deal of time participating in social activities and is not sensitive or open to many new experiences (Jackson, 1974).

Results also indicate that women in the battered group were less androgynous (that is, endorsed more stereotypical feminine sex roles) than women in the non-battered group while married.

#### Multivariate Statistics: Stepwise Regression

A stepwise regression was performed to determine whether an optimal combination of predictors existed which could discriminate the two groups and predict the subject's group membership. The criterion or dependent variable to be predicted consisted of group scores. The members of the non-battered group received a score of 0 and the members

TABLE 3

Results of t-tests for Predictor Variables

Predictors	Battered			Non-battered		
	$\bar{x}$	<u>s</u>	$\bar{x}$	<u>s</u>	df	T
Age	31.57	6.88	33.03	6.84	54	0.4314
MS	2.25	0.58	2.25	0.64	54	0.0000
NKID	3.50	2.42	2.25	1.46	54	-2.3372*
EDUC	10.96	2.02	12.78	2.68	54	2.8644**
ABA	8.89	3.00	6.64	2.56	54	-3.0076**
ACH	9.07	2.34	9.18	2.72	54	0.1579
AFF	9.10	3.36	10.21	3.26	54	1.2518
AGG	7.54	3.06	7.54	3.05	54	0.0000
AUT	5.82	2.76	7.54	3.84	54	1.9162
CH	8.21	2.63	8.75	3.40	54	0.6601
CS	8.43	2.64	8.18	3.29	54	-0.3134
DEF	6.00	2.96	6.46	2.50	54	0.6344

TABLE 3 CONTINUED

Predictors	Battered			Non-battered			T	df	t
	$\bar{x}$	s	$\bar{x}$	s	df				
DOM	4.61	3.25	8.29	3.47	54	4.0939***			
END	9.54	3.08	9.04	3.28	54	-0.5875			
EX	4.96	2.68	8.14	3.96	54	3.5145***			
HA	12.79	2.70	10.43	3.19	54	-2.9845***			
IM	6.86	3.45	7.61	4.07	54	0.7441			
NUR	12.18	2.34	11.29	3.05	54	-1.2277			
OR	8.32	4.68	8.43	4.39	54	0.0884			
PL	7.04	2.80	8.82	2.78	54	2.3984*			
SE	7.96	3.84	11.07	2.16	54	3.7292***			
SO	7.11	3.24	6.89	3.75	54	-0.2288			
SU	8.07	2.97	6.96	3.76	54	-1.2237			
UN	7.32	3.00	9.71	3.47	54	2.7562**			
IN	0.25	0.51	0.54	0.74	54	1.6668			
DY	9.46	3.26	10.46	2.71	54	1.2473			

TABLE 3 CONTINUED

Predictors	Battered			Non-battered		
	x	$\bar{x}$	x	$\bar{x}$	df	T
TSCS	297.29	18.50	294.64	22.57	54	-0.4791
TAScore	1.28	1.18	0.54	1.03	54	-2.4822*
NAScore	0.68	0.96	0.26	0.72	54	-1.8474

\* $p < .05$ .\*\* $p < .01$ .\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

of the battered group received a score of 1. The predictors consisted of the following ten variables which were found to be significantly different between groups: (1) NKID (2) EDUC (3) ABA (4) DOM (5) EX (6) HA (7) PL (8) SE (9) UN and (10) TASCORE. An "entry" criterion level of .50 and a "staying in" criterion level of .05 were utilized for this analysis.

The stepwise procedure yielded an optimal regression model consisting of three variables - DOM, SE, and TASCORE. (See Tables 4 and 5). Dominance, the single best predictor variable, was entered first into the model and accounted for 24% of the variance. Sentience, the next best predictor, accounted for another 8% of the variance given the contribution of the first variable and TASCORE, the third and final predictor, accounted for an additional 6% of the variance in the criterion. In summary, results indicated that knowledge of a subject's score on the DOM and SE scales of the PRF and the TASCORE of the BSRI allows prediction of the criterion at the .0001 level of significance.\* The  $R^2$  of .38 indicated that 38% of the variance in the criterion was accounted for by these three variables.

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\*Although EDUC showed a significant correlation with the criterion, it did not contribute enough unique variance when evaluated in terms of other variables, to be included in the regression model.

TABLE 4  
Intercorrelations Between Criterion and  
Predictor Variables: Total Sample

	NKID	EDUC	ABA	DOM	HA	PL	SE	UN	TAScore
NKID	-.13								
EDUC	.10	-.17							
ABA	-.18	.27*	-.39***						
DOM	.16	-.22	.38***	-.26					
HA	-.25	-.03	-.09	.08	-.30*				
PL	-.32*	.26	-.31**	.38***	-.48***	.40***			
SE	-.05	.52**	-.20	.36**	-.42***	-.07	.57***		
UN	.21	-.02	.01	-.27*	.04	.09	.03	-.04	
TAScore	.30*	-.36**	.38***	-.49***	.38***	-.31*	-.45***	-.35**	.32*
BAT									

Note. BAT refers to the criterion variable, battered.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

\*\*\* $p < .005$ .



TABLE 5  
Summary of Analysis of Variance and Related Statistics  
for Stepwise Regression

Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F	R <sup>2</sup>
Regression	3	5.31	1.77	10.62***	0.38
Error	52	8.68	0.17		
Total	55	14.00			

	B Value	STD. ERROR	SS	F
Intercept	1.33			
DOM	-0.04	0.16	0.88	5.24*
SE	-0.05	0.17	1.48	8.83**
TAScore	0.11	0.05	0.82	4.89*

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .005$ .

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

To determine the efficacy of prediction, a classification table was constructed. (See Table 6). On the basis of the three predictors, 64.29% of the battered women and 78.57% of the non-battered women were correctly classified.

#### Additional Results

The reader will recall the second objective of the present research was to compare the self concept of the battered versus non-battered women. Results of the t-test (See Table 3) indicated that the two groups did not differ significantly on a measure of self concept. In fact, mean scores on the TSCS were virtually identical.

TABLE 6

## Classification Results of Stepwise Regression

## Predicted Group Membership

		Battered (N = 28)	Non-Battered (N = 28)
Actual Group	Battered (N = 28)	18 64.29%	10 35.71%
	Non-Battered (N = 28)	6 21.43%	22 78.57%

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

To briefly review, a survey of the current literature in the area of wife abuse revealed no research to date which addressed itself to the issue of whether abused women differed from non-abused women in terms of personality variables. The major objective of this exploratory research was to fill this gap in the literature. Specifically, an attempt was made to determine whether any variable or combination of variables existed which could maximally distinguish the two groups.. Additionally the hypothesis that battered women exhibited a lower self concept than non-battered women was tested. The present discussion will address itself to each of these objectives, respectively.

Analysis of the data demonstrated that personality differences did indeed exist between the two groups of women. T-tests revealed significant differences on seven of the PRF scales and one scale of the BSRI. However, the t-tests did not take into account the intercorrelations between the variables. Therefore, the stepwise regression procedure utilized was more appropriate. As has already been reported the regression procedure yielded an optimal model consisting of three variables - DOM, SE, and TASCORE - which could pre-

dict group membership. The remaining variables did not contribute enough unique variance to be included in the model.

At this point, a more qualitative discussion of the above results is in order. Results indicated that battered women scored lower than non-battered women on the DPM and SE scales of the PRF and were less androgynous while married. More concretely, these women may be described as follows.

A woman attaining a low score on the Dominance scale may be described as one who often yields to the influence or direction of others. She expresses her opinions cautiously, if at all, and prefers the role of follower to that of leader (Balance & Bringmann, 1971). A subject attaining a low score on the Sentience scale may be described as one who is not particularly sensitive to the environment around her. She may fail to notice sounds, sights, and the way things feel and might be described as unobservant and unaware (Jackson, 1974).

Additionally, the abused woman endorsed a more stereotypical feminine sex role while married than the non-battered woman. For example, the abused woman tended to describe herself as "yielding", "affectionate", "helpful" versus "forceful", "dominant" and "assertive". In other words, the battered woman, while married, tended to see herself in terms of traditional sex roles.

At this point, it is possible to construct a tentative picture of the abused woman on the basis of the above results. It can be suggested that the battered woman, as reflected by this sample, is one who is rather passive and may easily yield to the influence of others. In the marital situation she tends to behave in a manner proscribed by traditional sex roles. But perhaps most interesting, results indicate that the battered wife is one who is not particularly attendant to the finer or more subtle aspects of her environment. Therefore it may be suggested that she is unaware of the important non-verbal cues which occur in interpersonal interactions. In terms of the potentially abusive situation the battered woman may not notice such things as the tone of voice and facial expression of her partner, which might serve as a signal for impending violence.

The reader should note at this point that the above interpretations are speculative. The stepwise regression procedure utilized allows one to predict group membership (i.e., battered or non-battered), however statements of a causal nature may not be made. The results do suggest however, that low dominance, low sentience, and endorsement of traditional sex roles while married are positively associated with abuse in this sample.

The final regression model achieved prediction at a highly significant level ( $p < .0001$ ). On the basis of the

three variables, 38% of the variance in the criterion was accounted for and 64.29% of the battered women were correctly classified. Prediction might be improved in future research by lowering the "staying-in" criterion of the model to .10. In this way, a greater number of variables might be retained in the model, resulting in a more complete picture of the personality of the battered woman.

In addition to lowering the "staying-in" criterion level, another approach might be taken as well. The reader is well aware that wife abuse is not a unitary phenomenon. Many factors - sociological, historical, psychological - contribute to the occurrence of abuse. Research has been cited, for example, which indicates that the battered woman or her partner may have been abused in childhood or witnessed parental violence. Therefore, perhaps some of the variance not accounted for in the present research is due to factors other than psychological ones. Future research might focus on attaining a more integrated picture of the abused woman by examining these various factors simultaneously.

The second objective of the present research was to test the hypothesis that battered women exhibited a lower self concept than non-battered women. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. In light of the fact that a number of authors (Martin, 1976; Pizzey, 1974; Truninger, 1971) have reported anecdotally that abused women have a very negative

self concept, this finding was curious. Additionally, one might rationally assume that a woman who had lived in an abusive situation for a number of years would exhibit a more negative self concept than her non-abused counterpart.

The following interpretation may shed some light with respect to this finding. As has been previously stated, both groups of women were matched as closely as possible in terms of marital status. The majority of subjects were either separated or divorced. The possibility does exist that the two groups differed in self concept while married and that the process of divorce or separation affected the self concept differentially.

It can be hypothesized that while married, the abused woman exhibited a more negative self concept than the non-abused woman. The process of terminating a life threatening situation with the consequent realization that she is able to cope relatively successfully may have acted to increase the abused woman's estimation of herself. Feelings of guilt which might have been associated with a failed marriage may have been overridden by the above factors. On the other hand, feelings of guilt and partial responsibility for an unsuccessful marriage might have negatively affected the self concept of the non-battered woman. Therefore, the self estimation of the non-abused woman decreased while that of the abused woman increased as a result of separation or divorce. The above



interpretation might explain the similar mean scores on the TSCS.

Obviously, further research is necessary to elucidate this issue. A future investigation might compare four groups of women - (1) married/non-battered, (2) married/battered, (3) divorced, separated/non-battered, and (4) divorced, separated/battered - in terms of their self concept in order to achieve further clarification.

### Conclusions

The purpose of the present research was exploratory in nature and investigated whether battered women differed from non-battered women in terms of personality variables. The results clearly indicated that differences do exist. Further research of a similar nature is required which will utilize a greater sample size. Additionally, future investigation might address itself to the examination of the woman who remains in an abusive situation. No support was found for the hypothesis that the two groups differed in terms of self concept. An interpretation of this result was offered and suggestions for future research were made.

In terms of more concrete applications, the findings of the present research might be utilized by those in the helping professions who work with battered women. Areas in which the therapist/helper might direct his/her efforts include teaching communication skills and assertiveness.

APPENDIX A  
PRF SCALES AND ABBREVIATIONS  
DESCRIPTION OF HIGH SCORERS  
AND DEFINING TRAIT ADJECTIVES

Abasement	ABA
Achievement	ACH
Affiliation	AFF
Aggression	AGG
Autonomy	AUT
Change	CH
Cognitive Structure	CS
Defendence	DEF
Dominance	DOM
Endurance	END
Exhibition	EX
Harmavoidance	HA
Impulsivity	IM
Nurturance	NUR
Order	OR
Play	PL
Sentience	SE
Social Recognition	SR
Succorance	SU
Understanding	UN
Infrequency	IN
Desirability	DY

## PERSONALITY RESEARCH FORM SCALES

## Dominance

Attempts to control his environment, and to influence or direct other people; expresses opinions forcefully, enjoys the role of leader and may assume it spontaneously.

## Sentience

Notices smells, sounds, sights, tastes, and the way things feel; remembers these sensations and believes that they are an important part of life; is sensitive to many forms of experience; may maintain an essentially hedonistic or aesthetic view of life.

# ERRATA

Due to an error in pagination, leaves 58 & 59 do not appear.

APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Name:
2. What is your age?
3. What is your marital status?
  - (a) single
  - (b) living together
  - (c) married
  - (d) separated
  - (e) divorced

If married, separated, or divorced, please state length of time.
4. Do you have any children?
5. How many and what are their ages?
6. How do you support yourself (and your children)?
7. Approximately what is your annual income?
  - (a) under \$5,000
  - (b) \$5,000 - \$6,000
  - (c) \$6,100 - \$8,000
  - (d) \$8,100 - \$10,000
  - (e) \$10,100 - \$13,000
  - (f) \$13,000 and over
8. What is your educational level?
9. Have you ever been employed?
10. When and for how long?
  - (a) currently
  - (b) less than 1 yr ago
  - (c) 1 year ago
  - (d) 2 years ago
  - (e) 3 years ago
  - (f) 4 years ago
  - (g) 5 years ago
  - (h) over 5 years ago
11. What kind of job was it?

12. If you are not employed, is there any particular reason for it?
- (a) children
  - (b) can't find job
  - (c) lack of job skills
  - (d) lack confidence
  - (e) husband won't permit
  - (f) other
13. What is/was your husband's educational level?
14. What is/was his occupation?
- (a) professional
  - (b) manager/administrator
  - (c) sales worker
  - (d) clerical worker
  - (e) craftsman
  - (f) technical worker
  - (g) laborer/truck driver
  - (h) unemployed
15. Is/was this satisfying to him?

extremely	moderately	indifferent	moderately	extremely
satisfying	satisfying		unsatisfactory	unsatisfactory

16. If not, why not?
17. How did you feel about your husband's job?

#### Marital Relationship

18. How long had you and your husband dated before marriage?
19. What were the main reasons you had for getting married?
- (a) love
  - (b) to get out of the house
  - (c) financial and security
  - (d) pregnancy
  - (e) other

(Please rank in order of importance)



20. How satisfied were you with your marriage?

---

extremely	moderately	indifferent	moderately	extremely
satisfied	satisfied		unsatisfied	unsatisfied

21. What were the main problem areas in your marriage?

- (a) money
- (b) sex
- (c) bringing up of the children
- (d) spending time together
- (e) jealousy
- (f) alcohol use
- (g) other

22. How did you deal with or settle these problems?

- (a) discussion and compromise
- (b) husband made the decision
- (c) wife made the decision
- (d) physical violence
- (e) ignore

23. How did you feel about this method of settling disputes?

---

extremely	moderately		moderately	extremely
satisfied	satisfied	indifferent	unsatisfied	unsatisfied

24. Do you feel you and your spouse could communicate well?

25. If so, what contributed to this?

26. If not, why not?

27. When you were experiencing a problem, who did you feel you could confide in?

- (a) husband
- (b) friend
- (c) neighbour
- (d) parents
- (e) other
- (f) no one

28. Did you participate in any outside activities in your spare time?

29. What kind and with whom?

30. If not, why not?
31. Have you and your spouse ever separated?
32. If so, for how long and what were the reasons for it?
33. Could you describe the circumstances which led to the decision to seek a divorce?
34. Did you or your husband have expectations of each other's behavior which were not met?
35. What was your husband's perception of you as an individual?

#### Childhood Factors

35. Were you ever abused as a child?
36. To your knowledge, was your spouse ever abused as a child?
37. How did your parents usually discipline you as a child?
38. Did you ever observe physical violence between your parents as a child?
39. If so, with what frequency?
40. To your knowledge, did your spouse ever observe physical violence between his parents as a child?
41. If so, with what frequency?

#### Abuse:

42. When did your partner's physical violence towards you begin?
  - (a) before marriage
  - (b) under 1 month
  - (c) 1-5 months
  - (d) 6-12 months
  - (e) 1-2 years
  - (f) 3-4 years
  - (g) 5-9 years
  - (h) over 10 years

43. With what frequency did it occur?
- (a) every day
  - (b) several times a week
  - (c) several times a month
  - (d) once every few months
  - (e) less frequently than that
44. Could you rate the type of violence on the following scale?
- (a) pushed or slapped
  - (b) threw object
  - (c) slapped a bit
  - (d) punched or kicked
  - (e) pushed down
  - (f) hit with hard object
  - (g) choked
  - (h) stabbed
  - (i) shot
45. What was your reaction to it?
- (a) try to defend yourself
  - (b) do nothing
  - (c) discuss it with spouse afterward
  - (d) leave premises
  - (e) call police
46. What were your feelings about it?
47. What do you think the main reasons were which contributed to the abuse?
- (a) sex
  - (b) jealousy
  - (c) alcohol
  - (d) expectations not met
  - (e) children
  - (f) money
  - (g) other

APPENDIX C  
TENNESSEE SELF CONCEPT SCALE

# TENNESSEE SELF CONCEPT SCALE

## Instructions

The statements in this booklet are to help you describe yourself as you see yourself. Please respond to them as if you were describing yourself to yourself. Do not omit any item. Read each statement carefully; then select one of five responses listed below. Put a circle around the response you choose. If you want to change an answer after you have circled it, do not erase it but put an X mark through the response and then circle the response you want.

Responses	Partly false	Mostly	Partly true	Mostly	Partly true	Mostly	Partly true	Mostly	Partly true
Completely false	Mostly false	Partly false and Partly true	Mostly true	Partly true	Mostly true	Partly true	Mostly true	Partly true	Completely true
1 I have a healthy body									1 2 3 4 5
3 I am an attractive person									1 2 3 4 5
5 I consider myself a sloppy person									1 2 3 4 5
19 I am a decent sort of person									1 2 3 4 5
21 I am an honest person									1 2 3 4 5
23 I am a bad person									1 2 3 4 5
37 I am a cheerful person									1 2 3 4 5
39 I am a calm and easy going person									1 2 3 4 5
41 I am a nobody									1 2 3 4 5
55 I have a family that would always help me in any kind of trouble									1 2 3 4 5
57 I am a member of a happy family									1 2 3 4 5
59 My friends have no confidence in me									1 2 3 4 5
73 I am a friendly person									1 2 3 4 5
75 I am popular with men									1 2 3 4 5
77 I am not interested in what other people do									1 2 3 4 5

Responses	Completely false	Mostly false	Partly false and Partly true	Mostly true	Completely true
91 I do not always tell the truth	1	2	3	4	5
93 I get angry sometimes	1	2	3	4	5
7 I am neither too fat nor too thin	1	2	3	4	5
9 I like my looks just the way they are	1	2	3	4	5
11 I would like to change some parts of my body	1	2	3	4	5
25 I am satisfied with my moral behavior	1	2	3	4	5
27 I am satisfied with my relationship to God	1	2	3	4	5
29 I ought to go to church more	1	2	3	4	5
43 I am satisfied to be just what I am	1	2	3	4	5
45 I am just as nice as I should be	1	2	3	4	5
47 I despise myself	1	2	3	4	5
61 I am satisfied with my family relationships	1	2	3	4	5
63 I understand my family as well as I should	1	2	3	4	5
65 I should trust my family more	1	2	3	4	5
79 I am as sociable as I want to be	1	2	3	4	5
81 I try to please others, but I don't overdo it	1	2	3	4	5
83 I am no good at all from a social standpoint	1	2	3	4	5
95 I do not like everyone I know	1	2	3	4	5
97 Once in a while, I laugh at a dirty joke	1	2	3	4	5

Responses	Completely false	Mostly false	Partly false and Partly true	Mostly true	Completely true
8 I am neither too tall nor too short	1	2	3	4	5
10 I don't feel as well as I should	1	2	3	4	5
12 I should have more sex appeal	1	2	3	4	5
26 I am as religious as I want to be	1	2	3	4	5
28 I wish I could be more trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5
30 I shouldn't tell so many lies	1	2	3	4	5
44 I am as smart as I want to be	1	2	3	4	5
46 I am not the person I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5
48 I wish I didn't give up as easily as I do	1	2	3	4	5
62 I treat my parents as well as I should (Use past tense if parents are not living)	1	2	3	4	5
64 I am too sensitive to things my family say	1	2	3	4	5
66 I should love my family more	1	2	3	4	5
80 I am satisfied with the way I treat other people	1	2	3	4	5
82 I should be more polite to others	1	2	3	4	5
84 I ought to get along better with other people	1	2	3	4	5
96 I gossip a little at times	1	2	3	4	5
98 At times I feel like swearing	1	2	3	4	5
13 I take good care of myself physically	1	2	3	4	5
15 I try to be careful about my appearance	1	2	3	4	5

Responses	Completely false	Mostly false	Partly false and Partly true	Mostly true	Completely true
17 I often act like I am "all thumbs"	1	2	3	4	5
31 I am true to my religion in my everyday life	1	2	3	4	5
33 I try to change when I know I'm doing things that are wrong	1	2	3	4	5
35 I sometimes do very bad things	1	2	3	4	5
49 I can always take care of myself in any situation	1	2	3	4	5
51 I take the blame for things without getting mad	1	2	3	4	5
53 I do things without thinking about them first	1	2	3	4	5
67 I try to play fair with my friends and family	1	2	3	4	5
69 I take a real interest in my family	1	2	3	4	5
71 I give in to my parents	1	2	3	4	5
85 I try to understand the other fellow's point of view	1	2	3	4	5
87 I get along well with other people	1	2	3	4	5
89 I do not forgive others easily	1	2	3	4	5
99 I would rather win than lose in a game	1	2	3	4	5
14 I feel good most of the time	1	2	3	4	5
16 I do poorly in sports and games	1	2	3	4	5
18 I am a poor sleeper	1	2	3	4	5
32 I do what is right most of the time	1	2	3	4	5
34 I sometimes use unfair means to get ahead	1	2	3	4	5



Responses		Partly false and Partly true					Mostly true					Completely true				
Completely false		Mostly false														
36	I have trouble doing the things that are right						1	2	3	4	5					
50	I solve my problems quite easily						1	2	3	4	5					
52	I change my mind a lot						1	2	3	4	5					
54	I try to run away from my problems						1	2	3	4	5					
68	I do my share of work at home						1	2	3	4	5					
70	I quarrel with my family						1	2	3	4	5					
72	I do not act like my family thinks I should						1	2	3	4	5					
86	I see good points in all the people I meet						1	2	3	4	5					
88	I do not feel at ease with other people						1	2	3	4	5					
90	I find it hard to talk with strangers						1	2	3	4	5					
100	Once in a while I put off until tomorrow what I ought to do today						1	2	3	4	5					

APPENDIX D  
BEM SEX ROLE INVENTORY

## BEM SEX ROLE INVENTORY

On the following page, you will be shown a large number of personality characteristics. We would like you to use these characteristics in order to describe yourself. That is, I would like you to indicate on a scale from 1 to 7 how true of you these various characteristics are. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

Example: sly

Mark a 1 if it is NEVER OR ALMOST NEVER TRUE that you are sly

Mark a 2 if it is USUALLY NOT TRUE that you are sly

Mark a 3 if it is SOMETIMES BUT INFREQUENTLY TRUE that you are sly

Mark a 4 if it is OCCASIONALLY TRUE that you are sly

Mark a 5 if it is OFTEN TRUE that you are sly

Mark a 6 if it is USUALLY TRUE that you are sly

Mark a 7 if it is ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE that you are sly

Thus, if you feel that it is sometimes but infrequently true that you are "sly", never or almost never true that you are malicious always or almost always true that you are "irresponsible", and often true that you are "carefree", then you would rate these as follows:

Sly	3	Irresponsible	7
Malicious	1	Carefree	5

1	2	3 DESCRIBE YOURSELF	4	5	6	7
Never or Almost Never True	Usually Not True	Sometimes but Infrequently True	Occasion- ally True	Often True	Usually True	Always or Almost Always

Self Reliant		
Yielding		
Defends own beliefs		
Cheerful		
Moody		
Independent		
Shy		
Conscientious		
Athletic		
Affectionate		
Theatrical		
Assertive		
Flatterable		
Happy		
Strong Personality		
Loyal		
Unpredictable		
Forceful		
Feminine		
Helpful		

Reliable		
Analytical		
Sympathetic		
Jealous		
Has leader- ship abilities		
Sensitive to the needs of others		
Truthful		
Willing to take risks		
Understanding		
Secretive		
Makes decisions easily		
Compassionate		
Sincere		
Self-sufficient		
Eager to soothe hurt feelings		
Conceited		
Dominant		
Soft-spoken		
Likable		
Masculine		

Warm		
Solemn		
Willing to take a stand		
Tender		
Friendly		
Aggressive		
Gullible		
Inefficient		
Acts as a leader		
Childlike		
Adaptable		
Individual- istic		
Does not use harsh language		
Unsystematic		
Competitive		
Loves children		
Tactful		
Ambitious		
Gentle		
Conventional		

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